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Letter dated 2 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

By means of the present letter and in my capacity as President of the Security Council for March 2018, I hereby wish to inform you of the open briefing of the Council on the Lake Chad basin region and the implementation of Security Council resolution 2349 (2017), under the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa", which took place on 22 March 2018. A concept note highlighting the importance of addressing the root causes of the conflict was drafted in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and the four countries in the region, Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria. Council members were urged to address the following questions:

1. What type of concrete action could the Security Council consider, including supporting countries and regional actors of the Lake Chad basin region, to strengthen stabilization and rehabilitation efforts in the region and advance the implementation of resolution 2349 (2017)?

2. How can the United Nations and the Security Council respond more effectively and coherently in terms of comprehensive risk assessment and risk management, early warning and concrete action in the Lake Chad basin region?

3. How can the United Nations contribute to ensuring that the need emphasized by the Council in resolution 2349 (2017) for adequate risk assessments and risk management, in particular in relation to climate change and ecological changes, is met?

As you are aware, the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammad, a remote sensing expert from the Lake Chad Basin Commission, Mohammed Bila, and the Senior Conflict Adviser from Adelphi, Chitra Nagarajan, briefed the Council on the root causes of the conflict in the Lake Chad basin region.

All three briefers highlighted the importance of addressing a variety of root causes, including the lack of local governance structures and participation of local communities. They also highlighted the link between increasing climate variability and water scarcity, among other environmental factors, and the developments in the region. In addition, briefers focused on the importance of risk assessments relating to climate change and ecological changes. Both Mr. Bila and Ms. Nagarajan emphasized the important role of the Secretariat in that regard, presenting concrete follow-up options to be considered by both the Security Council and the broader United Nations system. In summary, the briefers had the following recommendations for the United Nations system:

- Better reporting through the reporting cycles of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, including better risk assessment and analysis of climate- and ecological-related risks

- Conflict-, gender- and climate-sensitive programming that takes the local perspective into account and improves community participation

- Improved monitoring and reporting of programmes and their results to both the Security Council and other forums

Thereafter, all members of the Council made a statement, followed by Nigeria, whose Permanent Representative to the United Nations spoke on behalf of the four countries in the region (Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria). In most statements, with the exception of two members of the Council, the link between the adverse effects of climate change and the situation in the Lake Chad basin and its effects on the rise of violent extremism were confirmed. In addition, several members highlighted the link between water scarcity, drought, desertification and land degradation and the deteriorating situation in the region. All members of the Council highlighted the importance of regional efforts, such as the work of the Multinational Joint Task Force in pushing back Boko Haram. They stressed the need for increased funding to support these efforts and address the humanitarian needs. Some Council members also highlighted the need for a joint visit by the United Nations and the World Bank to the region, as stipulated in resolution 2349 (2017). In addition, the majority of Council members called for improved risk assessment and analysis for climate- and water-related risks relating to the conflict in the region and in other conflict situations, where relevant. They called for the Secretariat to strengthen reporting in that area.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands organized this open briefing in March to draw specific attention to the root causes of the conflict. In my capacity as President of the Security Council in March 2018, I hope that this briefing paved the way for the further implementation of resolution 2349 (2017). We look forward to collaborating with the Secretariat in furthering that effort.

I kindly request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Karel J. G. **van Oosterom**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative